THE

PLAN of an ESSAY

UPON

DELICACY.

WITH A

SPECIMEN of the WORK.

In TWO DIALOGUES.

By NATHANIEL LANCASTER, LL. D.

Aggrediar, non tam perficiundi
Spe, quam experiundi voluntate.

CICERO.

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M.DCC.XLVIII.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO

The Right Honorable

The EARL of

CHOLMONDELEY.

My LORD,

THE men of LETTERS ſeem to have well conſulted their own reputation and intereſt, when they threw off

the illiberal reſerve, which had long kept them at a diſtance from the converſible part of mankind, and ſecluded them from the high advantages of that excellent ſchool, which we call the POLITE WORLD. For it is a free and open commerce with people of diſtinction and cultivated abilities, which gives the true embelliſhment to ſenſe, and renders the attainments of the ſcholar conducive to the purpoſes of elegance and delight.

That

That freedom of debate and diverſity of topics, which adorn the converſations of men of rank and polite literature, will give his mind a generous enlargement, and open to him delightful ſcenes of knowledge, at once awakening the imagination and informing the underſtanding. From their diſquiſitions he will learn what is beautiful in the productions of art; from their demeanor, what is comely in manners. For where the ad-

vantages of birth and ſtation are united with liberal accompliſhments, there is the ſeat of elegance and the ſtandard of politeneſs.

Tho' the quickneſs of familiar diſcourſe admit not of an attention to that accuracy, which is required in writing; yet there is in theſe exalted intercourſes, a certain ſuperior ſpirit and genuine eloquence; which is, perhaps, a better help to the improvement of ſtyle, and a more enlivening model for

for imitation, than the cold efforts of the cloſet were ever able to produce. Thoſe happy turns, and emphatical ſprightly phraſes, which are ſtruck out by the heat of animated converſation, and that genteel graceful dignity of expreſſion, which is peculiar to thoſe who move in the higher ſpheres of life, will catch the ear of him who is familiarly accuſtomed to them, and ſteal, in ſome degree, into his own diction. For as our ſenſes naturally retain the print of the images which are com-

monly preſented to them; ſo our language almoſt unavoidably takes a tincture from thoſe, with whom we uſually converſe. Theſe effects are ſo conſtant, that we ſeldom fail to diſcover by a man's writings, with what kind of ſociety he has generally mixed.

I muſt add; that in theſe high ſcenes of obſervation, there are frequently ſuch lucky hints thrown out, as prove a fruitful ſource of thoughts and imagination, which

which would never have occurred to him in the ſtudious hour, or in the company of meaner ſpirits.

Theſe, My LORD, are ſome of the advantages, which men of elevated character and refined genius, communicate to him who is honored with their intimacy, and whoſe mind is ſuſceptible of the impreſſions. They raiſe him, as it were, above himſelf, giving him to enjoy ſome ſhare of their ſpirit, and darting a light into his breaſt,

breaſt, from that fire which enflames their own - - - -

"Quaſi lumen de lumine ſuo accendunt.

If under the incitement of theſe animating influences, he ſhould try to diſplay the beauties of DELICACY; the greatneſs of the encouragement may, in ſome meaſure, juſtify the boldneſs of the attempt: tho' it will be far from excuſing the unſucceſsful execution. And ſhould he happen not to fail; he can claim no other

other merit, but that of a faithful RELATOR; ſince his pretenſions go no farther, than to give them back the images of their own minds.

With this view the following ESSAY was undertaken: which is here, with a warm ſenſe of gratitude, addreſſed to YOUR LORDSHIP; whoſe indulgence lifted me up to that experience of life, and obſervation on TASTE and MANNERS, which gave birth to this deſign, ſupplied me with materials,

and

and was the only foundation, on which I could build any hopes of ſucceſs.

I am, My LORD, with the utmoſt deference and reſpect,

Your LORDSHIP's

Moſt Obedient

AND

Moſt Obliged

Humble Servant,

NATHANIEL LANCASTER.

THE PREFACE.

AMIDST the variety of compoſitions, with which the learned of this nation have enriched the REPUBLIC OF LETTERS, we ſtill want a TREATISE upon that QUALITY, which gives the finiſhing touches to the culture of the UNDERSTANDING, and diffuſes the fineſt delights through the commerce of HUMAN LIFE.

Tho' in the celebrated performances of our moſt elegant writers, we meet with many maſterly ſtrokes, and

and beautiful obſervations upon it; yet lying widely ſcattered in various intermitted ſpeculations, they have not that efficacy, which reſults from a regular plan and connected ſyſtem.

But if all that occurs were brought into one entire view, and ranged in the beſt order; many things would ſtill be wanting to complete the work, and give us that fulneſs of ſatisfaction, which we ſhould have received, had they entered profeſſedly upon the ſubject. Therefore, as it is impoſſible not to admire what they have done; it is natural to wiſh they had done more, and anticipated the neceſſity of any farther enquiries.

This omiſſion, it has been ſaid, was owing to an opinion, for ſome time too ſucceſsfully propagated — That HE only, who had attained the high accompliſhment, was equal to the

the taſk; and that to undertake the ſubject, carried with it an air of arrogating the character. This was an obſtruction, not to be ſurmounted by the cautious candidate for literary fame: ſince the very attempt to obtain, muſt unavoidably fruſtrate his hopes of public approbation.

If the author of the following ESSAY had been perſwaded, either that this opinion had any foundation in truth, or was ſtill generally received; the ſame reſtraining conſiderations would have kept him in the ſame bounds. But ſince he finds, it has now no longer the countenance of numbers, and is ſatisfied, it never had the authority of reaſon, he hopes he may endeavor to explain the nature, and illuſtrate the beauties of DELICACY, without the imputation of aſſuming to himſelf the glory of the attainment.

A man

A man may certainly be qualified to deſcribe a character in his cloſet, tho' he cannot act up to it in life: as we often find men well verſed in the theory of an art, and able to point out its ſeveral excellencies, who want either faculties or attention to reach the practice. The talents are founded upon different principles; and the one may ſubſiſt without the other, in the higheſt perfection.

If this be not allowed; the poet, as well as the hiſtorian, muſt be poſſeſſed of every great quality, which he paints with accuracy, or traces with diſcernment. And when we find him ſucceſsful in deſcribing the exploits of an Hero, we muſt conclude, that he is himſelf no leſs expert in the military art, and endued with equal magnanimity. But it cannot

cannot be denied that there has been many a writer capable of drawing up an army, and fighting a battle in all the propriety and vigor of language, who had confeſſedly as little addreſs to conduct the one, as courage to attempt the other in the field of action ——

"——linguâ melior, ſed frigida bello
" Dextera——".

And why ſhould the poſſeſſion of the quality be thought more requiſite in the diſplay of DELICACY? This is ſo far from appearing evident; that it ſeems rather to be, in ſome reſpects, a kind of diſqualifying circumſtance. It is not improbable, that the fine ſenſations in the ſoul of him, who has attained to this high refinement, might prevent him from doing full juſtice to his own accompliſhments: for DELICACY is always found to withdraw itſelf from every thing

that has the leaſt appearance of vanity. But if this obſtruction could be got over; yet when it is known to be his own picture, which he exhibits to view, it may be looked upon as the repreſentation of features and lineaments heightened by ſelf-regard and the biaſs of a partial judgment.

But tho' the attainment of the quality is not requiſite in the writer; yet it is eſſentially neceſſary that he ſhould be intimately acquainted with thoſe, in whom it is found to exiſt.

This is the ſource from whence he muſt draw not only the materials for his work, but the ability of carrying it into execution. For it is only by frequent intercourſes with men of rank and polite acquirements, that he can wear himſelf into that caſt of

of ſentiment and expreſſion, which the dignity of his ſubject indiſpenſably demands.

It has been the author's fortune, to be admitted into thoſe high ſcenes of improvement, and to have long been honored with the acquaintance of perſons, not leſs diſtinguiſhed by the refinement of their abilities, than the eminence of their ſtation.

On this foundation he builds his hopes. On the encouragement of ſuch advantages he reſts his apology for the undertaking; neither vainly aſſuring himſelf, that he has been able to make a right uſe of the opportunities, nor meanly courting the reader's favor, by profeſſing a very low opinion of his performance. He chuſes rather freely to confeſs, he has here exerted his beſt endeavors, and entire-

ly ſubmits himſelf to the deciſion of the public.

If he ſhould be judged unequal to the taſk; yet (he is inclined to think) the DESIGN may not be altogether uſeleſs. Tho' the plant did not thrive where it firſt ſprung; yet being removed to a better ſoil, it may gain new vigor, and advance to maturity.

But whatever be the event; it will be attended with this agreeable reflection; that he has not ſpent his hours in trifling amuſements, but in diſquiſitions of a ſerious nature and real concernment to mankind. Certainly we were intended for ſome farther ſatisfactions, than the attainment of ſuch things only, as are barely neceſſary to the ſupport of our being. We have faculties adapted to the enjoyment of REFINED DELIGHTS: Thoſe

Thoſe delights muſt therefore be relative to human life; which would prove a very inſipid poſſeſſion, without this heightening reliſh of exiſtence. The animal functions might indeed be carried on; but ſcarce with any joy beyond what the brutes themſelves experience. The elegant pleaſures of imagination, the enlivening ſatisfactions of liberal knowledge, and all the ſweet effects of the amiable paſſions would be entirely ſet aſide, and the rational part of the creation abandoned to the low employment of gratifying the coarſeſt appetites in the coarſeſt manner. Slender and ſordid would be the intercourſes of the friend and companion; if friend and companion could then be found: ſocial pleaſure would degenerate into SAVAGE MERRIMENT; and decent familiarity, into deteſtable freedoms; were they not under the controul

and guidance of this reſtraining quality.

But the pleaſure ariſing from the cultivation of this accompliſhment, is not the only circumſtance, which recommends it to our regard: for whilſt it improves our joys, it refines our MORALS, by cheriſhing thoſe fine emotions in the ſoul, which create an abhorrence of every thing that is baſe and irregular, and prepare the way for the eaſier impreſſions of virtue and honor. The taſte of beauty in the lower kind, leads naturally to the higher: and the love of harmony in exterior things, is a good ſtep towards the reliſh of what is graceful and amiable in the inward principles of the heart.

Whoever therefore undertakes the cauſe of DELICACY, is engaged, at the ſame time, in the ſupport

port of VIRTUE, and conſults the happineſs of every individual member of ſociety. For the manners of the GREAT are ſo conſtantly copied by their inferiors, that when a right ſenſe of order and decency prevails among the former, it will not be altogether wanting in the latter. The ſpirit of refinement ſtops not where it was firſt raiſed, but is caught from breaſt to breaſt: and tho' it operate with the greateſt efficacy where it finds the beſt materials; yet, in ſome degree, it is communicated to the whole body of the people.

It is the deſign of the author to ſet theſe points in a clear light; and to demonſtrate, that elegance of taſte and refinement of manners are the proper objects of a rational purſuit, illuſtrious ornaments to human nature, and leading characters to a virtuous and moral conduct. And if his

his endeavors ſhould fall far beneath the dignity of the ſubject; he hopes, however, they may be conſidered as a teſtimony of his warm regard, and of the deference and honor he thinks due to thoſe elevated characters, under whoſe influence we behold arts and ingenuity encouraged, life underſtood, and BRITAIN aſpiring to the reputation of ATTIC ELEGANCE and ROMAN URBANITY. And tho' her advances may not, perhaps, keep pace with the eagerneſs of our wiſhes; yet this ſhould rather animate than diſcourage her progreſs: ſince it is obſervable, that the extraordinary aſſiduity and ſkill neceſſarily employed to raiſe and perfect the poliſh of the NOBLER GEMS, is amply compenſated by that admiration and pleaſure, which reſult from the ſuperior luſtre.

THE

THE

PLAN of the whole WORK.

THE GENERAL DESIGN *of this undertaking is, to explain the nature, trace out the ſtandard, and recommend the cultivation of that quality, which in our language is marked out by the denomination of* DELICACY.

The work is carried on by way of DIALOGUE, *and opens with the characters of two gentlemen, who keep up the full enjoyment of thoſe ſatisfactions, which ariſe from the harmony of friendſhip; though in ſome reſpects the turn of their minds is extremely different.*

The

The one is a warm admirer of elegance in arts and manners, and is perpetually contending for the neceſſity of cultivating a refined taſte. The other thinks, that good ſenſe and virtue are ſufficient recommendations, and ſtand in need of no adventitious ornaments.

The converſation begins with a diſpute concerning the origin of ſociety, which, the author apprehends, will not be eſteemed an improper introduction to a work of this kind; ſince all the embelliſhments of life are undeniably derived from our aſſociations.

In the SECOND DIALOGUE, *the meaning of the word* DELICACY *is explained,*

plained, agreeably to what ſeems the genuine acceptation of it amongſt our moſt approved writers-----The nature of the quality, the criterion by which it is aſcertained, the objections made to the cultivation of refined taſte and paſſion, and the uſe and pleaſure ariſing from it, are diſtinctly examined.

The next treats of the riſe of elegant arts and manners, enquires from what ſource, it is moſt probable, they derived their original; and tho' the former may have firſt riſen in a FREE STATE, *whether the* MONARCHICAL FORM *be not a more proper nurſery for the latter. This enquiry is followed by a compariſon between the* ANCIENTS *and* MODERNS *with reſpect*

reſpect to the DELICACY *of* GOOD BREEDING.

The FOURTH *examines what it is, which conſtitutes* DELICACY *in* WRITING----. *And enquires into the characters of ſeveral greek and roman authors, ſo far as relates to the ſubject of this* ESSAY; *in which reſpect,* VIRGIL *is allowed to have greatly ſurpaſſed* HOMER. *This opens the way to ſome obſervations upon the court of* AUGUSTUS, *and the advances which were made in elegance and politeneſs under the influence of that accompliſhed prince.*

The FIFTH *is a diſſertation upon the riſe and progreſs of refinement in the*

the language, compoſitions, and manners of the ENGLISH NATION.

The SIXTH *conſiders thoſe qualities, which conſtitute* DELICACY *in a* PUBLIC SPEAKER; *and to what degree it ſeems to have riſen in this country ---- whether the flowers of ancient rhetoric and elocution, are preferable to plain good ſenſe and argument; beyond which point, the* ENGLISH ELOQUENCE *is ſaid ſcarce to aſpire. This converſation is cloſed with ſome reflections upon the power of fine language; which is compared to that of* MUSIC, *and ſhewn to be, in ſome reſpects, ſimilar, in the effects it produces.*

The

The SEVENTH *treats of that faculty in the art of* PAINTING, *which is called* GRACE, *and points out thoſe maſters, who have been moſt diſtinguiſhed by this quality.*

The FOUR *ſucceeding dialogues exhibit the character of an accompliſhed gentleman, and diſplay his conduct in the various ſcenes of life and converſation; ſhewing at the ſame time, that the trueſt and higheſt refinement conſiſts in the* PURITY OF MORALS; *and that* VIRTUE *is the moſt illuſtrious ornament of human nature.*

In contraſt to this repreſentation of elegance and ſanctity of manners,

ners, is exhibited the view of an impure and uncultivated demeanor; that the beauty of the one, and the deformity of the other may appear in a ſtronger point of light, by the neighborhood of its contrary character.

The NEXT *dialogue touches upon the peculiar charms of* FEMALE ELEGANCE, *and ſhews with what a ſuperior luſtre* DELICACY *manifeſts itſelf in that ſex, which is tempered with a purer flame, and formed with a quicker ſenſibility, and higher reliſh of every ornament and grace.*

The LAST *Converſation recommends the farther cultivation of this accompliſhment, and enquires whether the*

the advances, we have made in it, are equal to thoſe of a neighboring nation; and if not, to what cauſes the difference may be aſcribed.

The ESSAY *ends with a diſſertation on thoſe Deities, which were ſaid by the ancients to be the ſource of all that is amiable and pleaſing, to diſpenſe juſtneſs of taſte, love of beauty, and that happineſs of manner, which adorns and enlivens* MERIT, *and is a proper attendant upon* SENSE *and* LEARNING: *for which reaſon they uſually repreſented the* GRACES *in the train of the* GOD OF WISDOM

AN

AN ESSAY UPON DELICACY.

DIALOGUE I.

PHILOCLES is one of thoſe few, who can be chearful and employed, without having recourſe to the buſineſs or diverſions of the world. He has a warm imagination tempered with an excellent underſtanding, both which he

has improved by a judicious mixture of reading and converſation.

Tho' his inclination has led him into retirement; his talents qualify him for making a figure in the active ſcenes of life. Yet at the ſame time, it muſt be confeſſed, there is a certain natural delicacy in the frame of his mind, which would have rendered him leſs ſerviceable in buſineſs, than others of inferior abilities without the ſame refinement of temper. He is arrived to that period of life, when the powers of the mind are in their trueſt vigor: and having converſed at large long enough to give him a thorough knowledge of mankind, he has narrowed his friendſhips, as well as acquaintance, deſiring but few of either.

The ſpot he has choſen for his retirement is within a convenient diſtance of the town, yet not ſo near as to want any advantages of the country. He is a profeſſed admirer

admirer of what he calls REFINED SIMPLICITY, and diſcovers that chaſtity of taſte, not only in his judgment of the fine arts, but in his houſe, his furniture, his equipage; and in ſhort, throughout the whole conduct and oeconomy of his life.

At a ſmall diſtance from his houſe ſtands a wood; which has ſo many natural beauties attending it, that with a very inconſiderable expence, and by judiciouſly humoring the genius of the place, he has made it one of the moſt delightful ſcenes imaginable. In the centre he has erected a little temple, the materials of which are cheap and common: yet they are choſen with ſuch judgment, and thrown together with ſuch art, that perhaps the moſt coſtly ornaments could not have produced any thing more pleaſing to a juſt eye. It is covered with thatch, and paved with pebbles; and the pillars are nothing more than the trunks of ſome old oaks, which grew

upon the ſpot. But the plan is ſo happily deſigned, and ſo neatly executed; and the ſeveral parts are ſo harmoniouſly proportioned to each other, as well as to the whole, that it forms one of the moſt agreeable ſtructures I ever beheld.

To this favorite ſcene PHILOCLES retires, whenever he would enjoy himſelf or his friend without interruption. And here it was that SOPHRONIUS found him in his evening meditations, having been informed at his houſe, that he was taking a walk in the wood.

SOPHRONIUS and PHILOCLES have long lived together in the ſtricteſt intimacy, and moſt unreſerved communication of ſentiments. SOPHRONIUS has a juſt, rather than a lively imagination. His ſenſe is ſtrong, but improved more by the force of his own reflections, than by books; for he has thought much more than he has read. Not that

that he is unacquainted with the capital authors, both ancient and modern: but it is his maxim, that "Books have made more "fools than ever nature deſigned." Truth is the ſingle aim of his inquiries: and to ſtrew her paths with flowers, is, he thinks, to retard rather than forward the progreſs towards her. The mind is amuſing herſelf with little artificial beauties in the way, whilſt ſhe ſhould be puſhing forward to the end of her journey. In ſhort, as he is naturally of a phlegmatic conſtitution, he declares againſt enthuſiaſm of every ſort, eſteeming her as the worſt enemy that truth has to fear. He frequently rallies PHILOCLES upon this article; whom he thinks upon many occaſions, eſpecially where the fine arts are concerned, a downright viſionary.

After the general compliments had paſſed between theſe two friends—How, ſaid SOPHRONIUS ſmiling, ſhall I anſwer it to the

Dryad of theſe groves, for thus breaking in upon the contemplations of her votary; when, perhaps, ſhe is even now expecting you under ſome venerable oak, or favorite elm?

However romantic you may affect to think me in my amours, replied PHILOCLES, you do not in good earneſt, I hope, believe me ſo ill a judge of real happineſs, as to imagine me capable of thinking I could exchange the pleaſures of friendſhip for any more valuable enjoyment. No, SOPHRONIUS! as great an admirer as I am of theſe beauties of nature, ſhe is no where ſo charming to me, as in her moral operations, and that harmony ſhe produces from ſocial concord.

Were I to have traced the Genealogy of friendſhip, returned SOPHRONIUS, I ſhould hardly have expected to find nature her parent. It ſeems to me much more reaſonable

reaſonable to ſuppoſe this union derived from neceſſity and convenience, or ſome other principle ariſing from our wants and imperfections, than any implanted biaſs in our frame, previous to thoſe uneaſy feelings. The ſtate of nature could not have admitted of this refined commerce; ſince every individual, at that period, muſt have had a ſeparate and oppoſite intereſt.

It is for that reaſon, among others, anſwered PHILOCLES, why I think it improbable, that ſuch a ſtate ſhould ever have exiſted. There is in our frame ſo ſtrong a biaſs, ſuch an irreſiſtible tendency to unite in the ſocial circle, that we muſt either ſuppoſe mankind formed originally with affections very different from what appear in them at preſent, or give up the notion of this barbarous ſtate, as an abſurd and groundleſs ſuppoſition.

It is not to be wondered, ſaid SOPHRONIUS, that the firſt view of this rude ſtate ſhould ſtartle a mind, which has been accuſtomed to a regular community, and has formed its ideas of truth from familiar appearances of improved nature. But it is very eaſy to miſtake habits for affections, and aſcribe to the direct impulſe of nature, what is, in reality, owing to the maturity of time, and the diſcipline of many generations. Societies have been long eſtabliſhed: uſe has taught us the advantages, that are derived from them; and therefore we fancy that men fall naturally and unavoidably into aſſociations; when the truth is, they are only inclined to be ſociable from practice, rather than from any immediate incitement of nature, or the love of their ſpecies. Look back upon the accounts which poets, philoſophers, and hiſtorians give of mankind in the infancy of the world; and you will have a view very inconſiſtent with a

principle

principle of friendly union and ſocial coalition. They deſcribe them not only without arts and ſciences, but without habitations, laws, or even language itſelf, and feeding upon the raw herbage, like their fellow brutes, the tenants of the ſame ſhade and paſture. I remember a paſſage in Cicero, where he ſpeaks to this purpoſe of the firſt race of mortals [a]. And Horace [b], as well as Lucretius [c], you know, talk of them exactly in the ſame manner.

In ſhort, all the records of antiquity affirm, that in the firſt ages, the conceptions of mankind, their manners and diſpoſitions

[a] Nam fuit quoddam tempus, cùm in agris homines, beſtiarum more vagabantur: nec quidquam ratione animi, ſed pleraq; viribus corporis adminiſtrabant. Non jus æquabile, quicquid utilitatis haberet, acceperat, &c.

CICERO de Invent. lib. 1.

[b] Cum prorepſerunt primis animalia terris,
Mutum & turpe pecus, glandem atq; cubilia propter,
Unguibus & pugnis, dein fuſtibus, atq; ità porro
Pugnabant armis, &c.

HOR. Sat. lib. 1.

[c] —— Nemora atq; cavas montes ſylvaſq; colebant,
Et frutices inter condebant ſquallida membra.

LUCRET.

diſpoſitions were rude, barbarous and brutal; that their attainments went no higher than ſatisfying at any rate the coarſe demands of their unreſtrained appetites: and thus being under no controul in the gratification of their ſelfiſh paſſions, they ran into the moſt violent exceſſes, and were perpetually invading and ſeizing each other's property. This is the deſpicable figure mankind make in the ſeveral ancient pictures of their original ſtate.

I acknowledge, ſaid PHILOCLES, that this was the doctrine of the Epicureans: but the principles of a particular ſect cannot be looked upon as the ſtandard of antiquity. It is uſual with the learned, when they are endeavoring to eſtabliſh ſome favorite hypotheſis, to pick out a paſſage from a greek or roman author, that happens to co-incide with the notion to be advanced, and then argue from it, as a received principle among the ancients. Superficial

perficial reaſoners and minute philoſophers may be thus deceived: but SOPHRONIUS, I am ſure, is not ſo eaſily impoſed upon. And if he had been in the humor, he could have drawn up a long liſt of claſſical names, to throw into the ſcale againſt thoſe he juſt now mentioned. What think you of the GOLDEN AGE, when ——

Nay, interpoſed SOPHRONIUS, if you are for ſoaring to the airy regions of romance, I will not endeavour to attend your flight. I can follow you well enough, whilſt you keep within the humble paths of ſober reaſoning: but the towerings of an heated imagination are much too elevated for my reach.

— Have patience, good SOPHRONIUS! I was only going to mention what ſome of the ancients have thought concerning the ſtate of man, when he was yet new to being, and freſh from the hands of his Creator. The deſcription Ovid gives of his ſituation,

in

in that firſt period of his exiſtence, ſeems (ſome poetical embelliſhments excepted) ſuch as, were we to reaſon *à priori*, we ſhould conclude he was placed in. The firſt characteriſtic he gives of it is innocence ——

[d] Firſt roſe a golden age! the human mind
To faith's fair rules ſpontaneous then inclin'd,
" Unforc'd by puniſhment, unaw'd by fear:
" Man's words were ſimple, and his ſoul ſincere.

Seneca likewiſe gives an account of the ſtate of nature, as it ſtood in Saturn's reign, exactly conformable to this notion of ſocial virtue being then exerciſed in all its purity and peace [e]----

Nor

[d] Aurea prima ſata eſt ætas, quæ vindice nullo,
Sponte ſuâ ſine lege fidem rectumq; colebat:
Pœna metuſq; aberant, &c.

[e] " Tunc illa virgo, numinis magni dea,
" Juſtitia cœlo miſſa, cum ſanctâ fide,
" Terras regebat mitis. Humanum genus
" Non bella norant —— &c."

Then

Nor does it ſeem in the leaſt improbable, that ſuch a happineſs might once have been the lot of mortals; tho' their preſent degenerate ſtate is ſo different from it, as to need the ſtrongeſt reſtraints, to keep up any tolerable degree of order in the world. The luſt of avarice and ambition now indeed divide mankind, and deſtroy their mutual harmony. But before covetouſneſs crept into the world; before men had any temptation to invade the rights of equality; when titles, diſtinctions, and pre-eminences were yet unknown; why might not a number of people have

Then juſtice, virgin pure, of ſovereign power,
With ſacred faith, attendant handmaid, ſent
To this our globe, dominion held o'er men,
And rul'd with abſolute, but gentle ſway.
Unheard was diſcord's voice, and din of war,
The claſh of arms, and trumpet's direful ſound.
Nor walls, nor bulwarks, cities yet had rais'd:
Pervious and ſafe each unfenc'd entrance lay.
Peculiar rights were then unknown to men;
One common ſtock ſupply'd the friendly race.
The teeming earth pour'd out her fruitful ſtores
Spontaneous to her ſons—kind parent ſhe,
And tender guardian! pious children they!

SENECA. Trag. Octav. Act. 2.

have lived together in amity, enjoying every thing in common, and content with the natural products of the earth in ſome happy climate?

Becauſe it is inconſiſtent with the nature of human creatures, anſwered SOPHRONIUS, that any number of them ſhould live together in concord, without the curb of government. Had we come into the world with ſuch diſpoſitions, as our firſt parents are ſaid to have poſſeſſed before their fall; then indeed thoſe tranquil joys, which have (it ſhould ſeem) flouriſhed only in ſong, might have exiſted in reality. But as to their unhappy offspring, born, as they are, with depraved appetites, and inordinate ſelf-paſſions, it is abſolutely impoſſible, that either order, peace, or juſtice could ever have prevailed amongſt them, without the aid of ſome reſtraining force. Let a man fairly examine human nature, the tendency and effects

effects of our paſſions; and he muſt allow this to be the caſe.

It is in vain to produce any authority againſt the nature of things; and leaſt of all, that of the poets. They, you know, are not generally the ſtricteſt reaſoners; their aim being rather to pleaſe than inform. And though there is a thing, which we call truth in their art; yet not being tied down to ſevere hiſtorical matter of fact, they are at liberty to create ſcenes, which exiſt only in imagination. But if names are of any force, I could produce [f] Iſocrates, [g] Diodorus, and numbers of the moſt celebrated ancients, who repreſent the infancy of the world as rude and barbarous, as Hobbs, or any of the moderns ſuppoſe it to have been. Seneca, I will not deny, ſeems to favor your opinion: and in one

[f] Iſocrates, Orat. 3. ad Mæclin.

[g] Diodorus Siculus, lib. 1.

one of his epiſtles, the philoſopher is not leſs warm than the poet, in the deſcription of a GOLDEN AGE [h]. But after he had indulged his lively genius in the ſallies of imagination, reaſon re-aſſumes her ſeat, and he freely owns, that philoſophy was unknown to the world in that early period; that it was indeed an age of innocence, but not of wiſdom; and that the moral character was not then thoroughly underſtood. For virtue, ſays he, is not the gift of nature, but the product of art. The ſeeds of it are indeed ſown in our hearts; but if they are not cultivated with the utmoſt diligence

[h] Quamvis egregia illis vita fuerit, & carens fraude, non fuere ſapientes—Non erant ingenia omnibus conſummata—Non enim dat natura virtutem; ars eſt, bonum fieri—Ignorantiâ rerum innocentes erant. Multùm autem intereſt, utrùm peccare aliquis nolit, an neſciat. Deerat illis juſtitia, deerat prudentia, deerat temperantia & fortitudo. Omnibus his virtutibus habebat ſimilia quædam rudis vita: virtus non contingit animo, niſi inſtituto & edocto, & ad ſummum aſſiduâ cogitatione perducto. Ad hoc quidem, ſed ſine hoc naſcimur: & in optimis quoque antequàm erudias, virtutis materia, non virtus eſt.

SEN. epiſt. 90.

ligence and care, they will for ever remain in a dormant and inactive ſtate.

Does not this conceſſion entirely demoliſh the fine fabric he had juſt before erected? For ſurely mankind muſt have been abſolutely incapable of living together in ſocial harmony, whilſt the mind had not yet received that cultivation, which is requiſite to unfold thoſe latent principles of virtue; without which, it is impoſſible that numbers can live together with any ſort of comfort, or maintain any tolerable degree of peace and order. Cicero ſeems clearly to be of this opinion: for he derives all ſocial concord from the diſcipline of philoſophy, when he breaks out into a celebrated rhapſody upon the pleaſing reflection. [1]

[1] O vitæ philoſophia dux! O virtutis indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum! Tu urbes peperiſti; tu diſſipatos homines in ſocietatem vitæ convocaſti: tu eos inter ſe primo domiciliis, deindè conjugiis, tum literarum et vocum communione junxiſti: tu inventrix legum, tu magiſtra morum, & diſciplinæ fuiſti!

CICERO Tuſc. diſp. Ald. Venet. p. 242.

If the truth of opinions, returned PHILOCLES, were to be determined by antiquity; thoſe, who maintain the ſentiments I am contending for, might at leaſt go as high for their authority, as their oppoſers. The lines I repeated from OVID ſeem to be copied from HESIOD; who, as ſome affirm, was contemporary with HOMER. Though indeed, to trace this notion of the golden age up to it's true ſource, we muſt look for it in the Moſaical account of the firſt ſtate of the world, from whence it ſeems to be derived. But however, it is certain that the ſtate of nature, as deſcribed by HOBBS and his followers, could not have ſubſiſted long enough to be called a State, admitting it ever ſubſiſted at all. As it was nothing but a ſcene of war, conqueſt muſt either have ſoon introduced ſubjection; or the ſons of men muſt have been totally extinct. This [k] LUCRETIUS himſelf admits,

[k] Genus humanum jam tùm foret omne peremptum:
Nec potuiſſet adhuc perducere ſæcla propago.
Lucret. Lib. V. Lin. 92, 9H.

and owns that mankind muſt neceſſarily have periſhed under the inconveniences of ſuch a ſituation. Now from hence, it ſhould ſeem, a ſtrong reaſon might be drawn, to prove that this ſtate of nature is, at leaſt, as viſionary as the golden age. For tell me, SOPHRONIUS, can it be ſuppoſed with any juſtice to the wiſdom of the ſupreme Being, that he placed mankind originally in a ſituation, that muſt neceſſarily have defeated the ends of their creation, and utterly extirpated the whole ſpecies from off the face of the earth?

To argue, replied SOPHRONIUS, againſt the reality of a fact, from its conſequences, is hardly a ſafe method of inveſtigating ſpeculative truths; I mean, where the evidence is ſtrong on the ſide of the fact; and the conſequences are, at beſt, but hypothetical. This at leaſt you muſt allow, that the doctrine I contend for, has many great and illuſtrious names on its ſide.

Not ſo many, returned PHILOCLES, as might be produced on the contrary [l]. The noble Moraliſt has oppoſed it with that ſenſe and ſpirit, which ſo eminently diſtinguiſh his excellent writings [m]. Mr. LOCK indeed ſpeaks of a ſtate of nature, in contradiſtinction to civil ſocieties; and ſeems to think it might have exiſted [n]. But then he repreſents it, not as a ſtate of licence and diſorder, but as ſubject to the laws of reaſon: which, if I do not miſtake, is the very

[l] Nihil eſt tam illuſtre, quàm conjunctio inter homines hominum ——et ipſa caritas generis humani, quæ nata à ſatu, quo à procreatoribus nati diliguntur, et tota domus conjugio & ſtirps conjungitur, ſerpſit ſenſim foràs cognationibus primùm, tum affinitatibus, deinde amicitiis, poſt vicinitatibus, tum civibus, &c.

Cicer. de Fin. *lib.* V. edit. Ald. p. 119.

—— Omnes inter ſe naturali quadam benevolentia continentur.

Ibid. De Legibus. *lib.* I. p. 179

Conſtituendi verò juris ab illa ſumma lege capiamus exordium; quæ ſeculis omnibus antè nata eſt, quàm ſcripta lex ulla, aut quàm omnino civitas eſt conſtituta.

Ibidem. Leg. I. in initio.

[m] Lord SHAFTESBURY.

[n] Treatiſe on Government.

very thing which OVID intended in his deſcription of the golden age: for, no doubt, when the poet ſays, men obſerved the rules of right and juſtice without laws; he muſt mean, without thoſe of civil compact.

That mankind are naturally of an uniting ſocial Temper is maintained by GROTIUS, PUFFENDORFF, and many other great and learned men.

Now if their natural ſociability be once admitted; the State of Nature as deſcribed by HOBBS, and adopted by my friend, muſt neceſſarily fall to pieces; for moſt certainly they are not compatible. Think not then, SOPHRONIUS, (to uſe the words of our ethic poet)

" Think not, in nature's ſtate men blindly trod;
" The ſtate of nature was the reign of God *.

* POPE's Eſſay on Man.

If mankind, ſaid SOPHRONIUS, had been originally formed with ſuch an affection for each other, as to be led from thence into aſſociations; this endearing principle muſt have prevented thoſe bloody violences and fatal quarrels, by which ſuch numbers of the ſpecies are conſtantly diminiſhed. But war ſeems to be one of thoſe ſtated methods, that providence takes to remove the generations of men from off the face of the earth; that there may be room for others to take their turn upon this ſtage of exiſtence. And indeed, were the deſtructive contentions, that ariſe from ambition and public reſentment, entirely to ceaſe; our ſpecies alone would ſoon overſtock the globe. If therefore it had been the Creator's pleaſure to have formed us with a ſtrong implanted ſenſe of mutual love; we may preſume, the plan of providence would have been very different

from

from that, which ſeems now to be eſtabliſhed.

But ſuppoſe men were originally framed with this amicable diſpoſition, this fondneſs for ſocial Intercourſe; yet, whatever was the cauſe, it is evident, they had ſo far departed from their primæval virtue, that the hiſtories of every country repreſent a period, when its inhabitants were as ſavage and unſocial as the ſtate of nature is deſcribed. If you queſtion the credit of theſe records; you need go no farther for full conviction, than our northern iſlands; in many of which the natives are as little acquainted with order, diſcipline and juſtice, or any of the virtues of humanity, as the very brute creation. This agrees exactly with the deſcriptions given us of other uncivilized people ſtill ſubſiſting in the world. How then do theſe virtues operate neceſſarily upon mankind?

I muſt

I muſt confeſs, replied PHILOCLES, that I have frequently met with ſuch deſcriptions: but the teſtimony of the authors never appeared to me ſo clear, as to leave no room to call in queſtion their veracity. From the beſt information I have been able to obtain, I am led to believe, there is no people upon earth ſo ſavage, as not to have formed ſome kind of ſociety, ſome ſort of laws, however imperfect, to reſtrain violences, and puniſh tranſgreſſions. It is abſolutely impoſſible that men could otherwiſe have ſubſiſted, ſince the time they fell from their primitive innocence.

But let me aſk SOPHRONIUS —— Is not well-being agreeable to our nature? —— "----It muſt be allowed." Tell me then, can that be obtained without ſociety? "--- Undoubtedly not." Society therefore muſt be natural to us. And if it be; is there nothing within us, no impulſive principle

ciple to excite and lead us to aſſociate? What think you of pity and compaſſion? the general diſlike of ſolitude, and love of company? Some traces of them, at leaſt, are found in men of all ages and climates. What think you of the powers and capacities of ſpeech? Why were they given us, if not to be exerciſed? And how can they be exerciſed without ſociety? It is evident too, that nature has implanted in us the principle of juſtice: But for what purpoſe, if not for the uſe of ſociety?

It is plain therefore, in every view, that we are formed with a love for our ſpecies; and conſequently, with ſocial paſſions. To conſider mankind in any other light, is, to degrade them even below the beaſts. What a deſpicable opinion muſt that man entertain of the order of beings, to which he belongs, what regard for virtue! —

Pardon

Pardon me, good PHILOCLES, if I cannot forbear interrupting you. Men of an elevated ſpirit are conſtantly exalting their ſpecies to the ſkies, and branding all thoſe, who talk more temperately on the ſubject, as enemies to virtue. But you greatly miſtake me, if you imagine I have taken this ſide of the queſtion with any intention to weaken the cauſe of morality. It is your way to paint mankind, as your generous warmth inclines you to wiſh they had been formed: whilſt men of cooler temper are content to view things as they really are, rather than as a falſe, tho' pleaſing light may repreſent them. They find nothing to ſupport thoſe high notions you entertain of the intrinſic dignity of the ſpecies, —no principles in mankind, which lead directly and neceſſarily to combining fellowſhips. Man, ſay they, was created frail and weak, ſubject to wants, which in a ſingle capacity he could not ſupply, and obnoxious

to

to dangers, againſt which his own unaſſiſted arm was not a ſufficient defence. An union of the MANY was therefore formed, as a remedy for the imbecillity of ſeparate individuals. Hence juſtice aroſe; and the rule of right was aſcertained and enforced, as a neceſſary means to maintain the plan of ſocial order. You aſſert, that the law of equity is an original implanted principle in the human breaſt. But if I were inclined to diſpute this point with you; I might aſk, what occaſion would there have been for ſuch a law, if man had been framed with ſo ardent an affection towards his ſpecies, as you contend for? Where love reigns in full power, property cannot be a ſubject of contention. So far is ſhe from doing violence and wrong, that ſhe is ever tender of the welfare and intereſt of the object beloved, and even laviſh in her munificence.

I do

I do not contend, ſaid PHILOCLES, that the ſocial and kind affections are ſo ſtrong as to ſubdue all the reſt; but only that there are ſuch paſſions in mankind, in conjunction with others. The love of our ſpecies cannot therefore be ſaid to ſuperſede the love of equity: on the contrary, they are entirely compatible with each other. Nor does it ſeem in the leaſt to follow, that, if the caſe be as I have ſtated it, univerſal peace and juſtice muſt for ever prevail. For man being liable to great errors, not only from the miſ-rule of his paſſions, but the imperfection of his reaſon, many occaſions of moral evil muſt neceſſarily ariſe, notwithſtanding the ſocial affections are allowed to exiſt in all the ſtrength, which I contend for.

But had mutual affection, returned SOPHRONIUS, been only a leading paſſion in us; or had it been equally ballanced with ſelf-

ſelf-regard, all legal reſtraints had been entirely unneceſſary. Man would have been in no danger from the ſecret attempts of fraud, or the bold attacks of bare-faced oppreſſion: his whole life would have been one continued ſcene of ſecurity and happineſs. But the legiſlators found his real ſtate to be quite another thing. If they did perceive that nature had clearly dictated the law of equity; yet experience taught them, "That the "adminiſtration of that law was ſo in-"competently and irregularly executed, as "to inflame rather than heal the evils of "the undiſciplined ſtate, whilſt there was "no common arbiter to adjuſt and enforce "its operations [P].

Theſe are the reaſons, which induce me to believe, that dangers and neceſſities gave birth to the plan of government. And when

[P] W——'s D. Legat.

when ſociety was eſtabliſhed upon a proper baſis, and equitable laws had given ſecurity to mankind, the commnnity had full experience of its happy effects. But as particulars ſtill felt many wants, for which the public combinations afforded no relief; it was natural for them to look out for a ſupply to this deficiency. The moſt obvious ſeems to be private fellowſhips; which by an union of hearts, and amicable intercourſes might procure enjoyments, which do not reſult from general aſſociations.

This I take to be the true ſource of friendſhip: nor does it appear to me any derogation to the lovelineſs of the affection. For, what but the imbecillity of our frame gives riſe to that paſſion, which is looked upon as the moſt amiable belonging to our nature? Had the firmneſs of our minds been greater, our compaſſion had certainly been leſs. For it is ever found, that as the ſofteſt metals are moſt eaſily

diſ-

diſſolved; ſo the tendereſt minds ſooneſt melt into pity. This perhaps is the reaſon, why that ſex, whoſe characteriſtic is by no means ſtrength, are moſt liable to the impreſſions of this afflicting paſſion.

Pity, returned PHILOCLES, can hardly be ſaid to flow from weakneſs in the ſame ſenſe that you ſuppoſe ſocial affection to do ſo: in the latter, weakneſs is the attribute of that ſuject, from whence the affection is ſuppoſed to proceed; men united, becauſe they found themſelves too weak to ſubſiſt in a ſeparate ſtate: — but in the former, weakneſs can only be the attribute of that ſubject, on which the paſſion is ſuppoſed to operate. It is not the weakneſs of the diſtreſſed object, but of him who beholds it, which produces the ſympathizing ſorrow. Imbecillity therefore cannot give riſe to ſocial Inclinations, in the ſame way you imagine it does to compaſſion. The only inference, that can fairly be drawn from

from your argument, ſeems to be, that the tenderneſs of ſenſations, or weakneſs (if you will call it ſo) is the means whereby the paſſion operates upon any ſubject: but it does not therefore follow, that it is the fountain of the paſſion; or that it is grounded on no other principle in nature. For why ſhould SOPHRONIUS aſcribe this ſuſceptibility of compaſſion, to a weakneſs of mind? Is it not far more reaſonable to derive it from the quick feeling of the ſentiments of humanity, and the ſudden exertion of generous ſympathy? Examine the condition of your own breaſt under a lively ſenſe of pity; and tell me whether you do not always find, that it gives you an exalted idea of the generoſity of your temper, when it is touched in this kind and benevolent way? And tho' it may perhaps draw tears from your eyes; yet they are the tears of manly affection, and not the meltings of weak effeminacy. For ſurely, SOPHRONIUS, there can be no weakneſs

neſs in compaſſion, purely and abſtractedly conſidered; ſince the nobleſt ſouls are open to the ſtrongeſt impreſſions of this kind. HOMER, who had a complete inſight into human nature, and ſo well underſtood what it was that gave the finiſhing excellence to a character, repreſents the hero of his poem, the great ACHILLES himſelf, melting into pity at the miſeries of a venerable aged monarch, on his knees begging him to reſtore the body of his ſon HECTOR. Nay he not only makes him relent, but even endeavor to aſſuage the ſorrows of the unhappy prince, with the moſt tender, as well as rational conſolations [p]. Pity then, in the eſtimation

[p] Αὐτίκ' ἀπὸ θρόνε ὦρτο, γέροντα δὲ χειρὸς ἀνίστη,
Οἰκτείρων πολιόν τε κάρη, πολιόν τε γένειον·
Καί μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα.

" From the high throne divine Achilles roſe:
" The rev'rend monarch by the hand he rais'd;
" On his white beard and form majeſtic gaz'd,
" Not unrelenting. Then ſerene began
" With words to ſooth the miſerable man.
Iliad 24. Pope's Tranſl.

There

of this judicious poet, who was always true to nature, is perfectly compatible with an elevated and ſublime ſpirit. Nay, is it not an attribute aſcribed even to the Deity himſelf? How then can it be derived from ſo mean an original? It is indeed a ſoftneſs, but not (as you call it) an imbecillity of heart. JUVENAL, I remember, ſomewhere extolls it as the beſt and moſt lovely paſſion belonging to human nature, and the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of our ſpecies [q].

You

There is not, as Mr. Pope obſerves, a more beautiful paſſage than this, in the whole Iliad. Homer, to ſhew that Achilles was not a mere ſoldier, here draws him as a perſon of excellent ſenſe, and ſound reaſon. And it was a piece of great judgment thus to deſcribe him: for the reader would have retained but a very indifferent opinion of him, if he had had no qualification, but mere ſtrength. It alſo ſhews the art of the poet, thus to defer this part of his character to the concluſion of the poem: By theſe means, he fixes an idea of his greatneſs upon our minds, and makes his hero go off the ſtage with applauſe.

Pope's Homer, B. 24. p. 168. Ed. 1736.

[q] "——— Molliſſima corda
" Humano generi dare ſe natura fatetur,
" Quæ lachrymas dedit. Hæc noſtri pars optima ſenſûs.
" ——— Separat hoc nos
A grege mutorum. Juven. Satyr. 15.

" Com-

You muſt be ſenſible, returned SOPHRONIUS, that whatever notion the poet might advance to flatter mankind, or beautify his compoſition; yet the generality of the ancients derived pity from no higher a ſource than that, which I have aſſigned. SENECA calls it the fault of a poor puſillanimous ſpirit; and affirms, that the baſeſt tempers are moſt ſuſceptible of this paſſion. The wiſe and good, ſays he, will not pity, but he will relieve; but he will run to the aid of the diſtreſſed. So far is he from dropping a ſympathizing tear with the unhappy; that he is not moved even by his own calamities, but, like a ſolid rock, reverberates the ſtorm, and ſtands ſecure [r].

" Compaſſion proper to mankind appears;
" Which nature witneſs'd when ſhe gave us tears.
'Tis this, the nobleſt paſſion of the mind,
Exalts our race above the brutal kind.

[r] Clemen iam, manſuetudinemque omnes boni præſtabunt: miſericordiam autem vitabunt: eſt enim vitium puſilli animi ad ſpeciem malorum alienorum ſuccidentis. Itaque peſſimo cuique

But how does it appear, ſaid PHILOCLES, that PITY has the ſame idea in our language, which MISERICORDIA had in the roman? Perhaps this might mean a ſenſeleſs, effeminate conſternation, that ſeizes weak minds on the proſpect of any thing diſaſtrous, and deprives them of the capacity to relieve the miſery they behold.

There is a paſſage in the author I juſt now mentioned, returned SOPHRONIUS, which makes it evident, that he underſtood by MISERICORDIA, the very ſame thing, which we do by the word PITY. [s] He tell us, "that

cuique familliariſſima eſt. Anus & mulierculæ ſunt, quæ, &c. —— Ergo non miſerebitur ſapiens, ſed ſuccurret, ſed proderit. —— Ne in ſuis quidem accidet calamitatibus, ſed omnem fortunæ iram reverberabit, & ante ſe franget, &c.

Seneca de Clem. lib. II. edit. Dan. Elz. 1672.

[s] Vultum quidem non dejiciet, non animum, ob æruſcantis alicujus aridam ac pannoſam maciem, & innixam baculo ſenectutem. —— Sed omnibus dignis proderit, et deorum more, calamitoſos propitius reſpiciet. Seneca. Ibid.

" that a wiſe man will look upon a beg-
" gar laboring under all the diſtreſſes of po-
" verty and infirmities of old age, with a
" countenance unaltered, and his heart un-
" moved at the ſight of the calamity." From hence it is plain, that in the judgment of this philoſopher, it was a weakneſs, to be moved and diſturbed with the miſery of another.

CICERO is alſo clearly of the ſame opinion, as may be proved from ſeveral paſſages in his philoſophical works [t]. And tho' in ſome of thoſe places, he is giving us the ſentiments of the Stoics; yet he does not heſitate to approve of their opinion [u]. Nay the very definition, which both he and SENECA give of pity, is — " A diſorder

[t] Videamus quanta ſint, quæ à philoſophiâ remedia animorum morbis adhibeantur —— variæ ſunt curationes; alia invidenti, alia miſeranti. Cicero. Tuſc. Diſp. lib. IV. p. 231. edit. Ald. Man. & paſſim.

[u] Sententiis tamen utendum eſt eorum (viz. Stoicorum) qui maximè forti, et, ut ita dicam, virili utuntur ratione. Ibid.

" of the mind ariſing from the view of ano-
" ther perſon's miſery [w]."

Little therefore, good PHILOCLES, will a poetical quotation avail, to aſcertain the ſentiments of the ancients; which ſurely are to be drawn from the ſober diſcourſes of their philoſophers, rather than the raptures and viſions of their poets.

But you ſend me likewiſe to the human breaſt for conviction in this point. Why there it is, that I find my ſentiments confirmed. When I behold human calamities; I perceive all my faculties overpowered at the afflicting ſight. The vigor of my mind fails; and I yield, as it were with

[w] Miſericordia eſt ægritudo animi ex alienis rebus adverſis. Ibidem. And that by ægritudo he meant a diſorder or wrong ſtate of mind, is plain from another paſſage, where he ſays —— Ægritudo eſt animi, adverſante ratione, contractio. Ibid. 218.

Miſericordia eſt ægritudo ob alienarum miſeriarum ſpeciem, aut triſtia ex alienis malis contracta. Ægritudo autem in ſapientem virum non cadit.

Seneca de Clementia. Lib. II.

with reluctance, to ſome ſuperior force. Men of a more refined frame, who entertain exalted notions of the dignity of man's nature, may flatter themſelves, that, in ſuch a ſituation, they feel a conſciouſneſs of generous excellence: But as to my ſelf, I cannot triumph in imaginary greatneſs of ſoul, againſt the clear conviction of my ſenſes. I freely confeſs, that it is nothing but the weakneſs of my mind, to which I can aſcribe the ſudden effects, which an object of miſery raiſes in my breaſt.

But think not therefore that this is any derogation to the wiſdom of the creator. On the contrary, it ſeems a wiſe deſign, to have formed us with this imbecillity, that we might be rouzed by a quicker impulſe than that of reaſon, and forced to give ſpeedy relief, that we might as ſpeedily eaſe ourſelves of the anxiety raiſed in us at the ſight of diſtreſs. Thus do our very frail-

ties and imperfections lead us to benevolence, and draw us into public and private fellowſhips. Let not then PHILOCLES imagine, that I am endeavoring to depretiate either the one or the other, when I ſay they are derived from weakneſs and neceſſity.

That the former could not ariſe from affection to the ſpecies, ſeems evident from the ſmall degree of it, which was ever found in the world, and from the animoſities and contentions, neceſſarily attending the ſelf-appetites under no legal reſtraints: And as to the latter; whilſt men had no protection and ſecurity from laws, ſelf-preſervation muſt have been the only object of their attention and care. But how was it poſſible, in ſuch a ſituation, for the undiſciplined mind to exert her faculties, and plan a ſcheme of private aſſociation, before a public was eſtabliſhed; from whence alone ſhe could derive that leiſure and ſafety, which

which were requiſite to form the more diſtant ſcheme?

I can by no means allow, returned PHILOCLES, that the ſelf-appetites were under no reſtraint, even ſuppoſing a time, when civil compacts were not yet eſtabliſhed. If ſelf-affection pleads one way; benevolence (a paſſion equally belonging to our frame) pleads as ſtrongly the other: and the latter can no more be ſuppreſſed than the former, without doing violence to nature.

But ſee the force of Truth! whilſt you would repreſent your ſpecies under diſadvantageous characters, you were inſenſibly led into an argument, which demonſtrates benevolence to be the original growth of man's heart, and what muſt conſequently have drawn him into ſociety. Pity, you have allowed, is a natural paſſion. And what

what is pity, but love ſoftened by a degree of ſorrow, the meltings of a benevolent heart? This then was the generous ſympathy, which knit mankind together and blended them in one common intereſt. From hence then it appears, that if nature did not directly dictate aſſociations to the human kind, ſhe yet gave them ſuch preparative faculties, as drew them by degrees into national brotherhoods. In this view, "ſhe ſeems to have treated us as "a painter does his diſciples, to whom he "commits ſome rude ſketches and out-"lines; which they themſelves are to color "and complete [x]."

The paſſion of pity is then a full proof, that men have naturally a love for their

[x] Ut Phidias poteſt à primo inſtituere ſignum, idque perficere; poteſt ab alio inchoatum accipere et abſolvere: Huic eſt ſapientia ſimilis. Non enim ipſa genuit hominem, ſed accepit à naturâ inchoatum: hanc ergò intuens, debet inſtitutum illud, quaſi ſignum, abſolvere.

Cicero de Finibus, p. 99. Edit. Ald. Manuc.

their ſpecies, however it may be checked or ſtifled by ſome counter-inclination; which, it cannot be denied, is too often the caſe. Senſible of this truth, the legiſlators took infinite pains, and called forth all their ſkill, to rouze the dormant paſſion. This ſeems to be the concealed meaning of what the poets tell us concerning ORPHEUS and his lyre.

Thus in every view, it ſeems evident, that it was affection for the ſpecies, which drew men into ſociety; and that without it, they never did, and never can ſubſiſt. For could nature intend to preſerve and propagate the ſpecies, and not maintain fellowſhip and mutual affection? Whence ariſes that ſtrict agreement between the ſexes, in the care of their growing offſpring, but from love? And can you ſtop here? How (as I remember Lord SHAFTSBURY cloſely puts the queſtion)

" How

" How ſhould man break off from this ſo-
" ciety, if once begun? And that it began
" thus, and grew into an houſhold, is an
" inconteſtable fact. And muſt not this
" houſhold have ſoon grown into a tribe?
" that tribe into a nation?"

Here PHILOCLES pauſed — when looking ſtedfaſtly on his friend — O SOPHRONIUS, ſaid he, is it poſſible you can in good earneſt contend againſt the reality of the kind and generous affections? Is it poſſible you cannot diſcover a moral attraction in our natures, which unites mankind to each other, previous to all conſiderations of intereſt or convenience?

But I have long ſuſpected, that we are drawn into opinions from our conſtitutional propenſities, as the ſtream follows the ſeveral declivities of the ground, through which it flows. Something, perhaps, of this

kind may have given a biaſs to my friend's ſentiments, and turned them aſide from that ſcheme he is oppoſing. But I will not deſpair of reconciling you to more favorable thoughts of the human kind. No method ſeems more probable to effect this, than a contemplation of nature in theſe her viſible operations. From her (it is confeſſed) the deſigning and imitative arts derive all their energy and grace. And yet ſhe herſelf, it ſeems, (helpleſs parent!) is deſtitute of all thoſe charms and delicacies, ſhe confers on her acknowledged offſpring! But ——

It is very poſſible, interrupted SOPHRONIUS, that the opinions of mankind may be influenced by their tempers. The fruit, no doubt, will partake of the nature of the ſoil. But PHILOCLES ſhould remember, that the ſame obſervation will ſerve to explain the riſe of his ſentiments, no leſs than

than mine. I am, however, very willing to confeſs; that I am always aſhamed of being pleaſed, where I cannot aſſign the cauſe; and am extremely apt to ſuſpect my judgment concerning any object, that moves my paſſion. For this reaſon, I ſhould hardly ſend my diſciple to the ſchool of arts (for there, PHILOCLES, you ſeemed to be pointing) for his inſtruction in the truth of ſevere philoſophy. A good picture, a well-executed ſtatue, or a fine ſtyle, give me (ſo far as I am able to diſcover clearly their reſpective beauties) ſome degree of pleaſure. But when the profeſſed admirers, the connoiſeurs in theſe ſeveral arts, talk of their nameleſs graces, their certain inexplicable delicacies, and, I know not what, other fine terms, of which they themſelves do not pretend to explain the meaning; there, I confeſs, I am left behind, and reſerve my rapture, till I receive my conviction.

For

For tell me, PHILOCLES, what is this DELICACY, either in the arts or conduct of life, which you are conſtantly extolling in ſuch high ſtrains, and with ſuch an air of earneſtneſs, as if you were perſuaded that there is ſomething in it real and ſubſtantial?

PHILOCLES was going to reply; when a ſervant informed them, that ſupper was upon the table. However, in their way to the houſe, he took occaſion from the beautiful ſcenes they paſſed, to throw out ſome general reflections in ſupport of his favorite doctrine: for he was determined to omit no opportunity of drawing his friend into the love and ſtudy of refinement; the diſregard to which accompliſhment, he looked upon as the chief deficiency in the character of SOPHRONIUS.

DIALOGUE II.

AS SOPHRONIUS is an early riſer, he was amuſing himſelf in the library, before PHILOCLES was yet ſtirring. But his friend, perceiving it now day, ſoon followed him thither, being unwilling to loſe any opportunity of enjoying a converſation, in which he found himſelf often inſtructed, and always entertained.

How happy (ſaid PHILOCLES entering the room) how happy would it be for the faſhionable world, were they as well acquainted " with this ſweet hour of prime,"

as you SOPHRONIUS are, who ſeldom ſuffer the ſun to riſe upon you in bed!

Rather, replied SOPHRONIUS, how much happier would it be for the world in general, would certain active ſpirits be perſuaded to ſlumber life away! ſince they wake but to purſue their ambition, or vent their impertinences, and riſe only to embroil or miſlead mankind.

Undoubtedly, ſaid PHILOCLES, if many of thoſe, whoſe actions fill our hiſtories, or whoſe ſpeculations ſwell our libraries, had paſſed their whole lives in profound ſleep; the world would have been obliged to them for their repoſe, but can only now lament that they were ever awake.

I was reading the other day (continued he) a treatiſe upon bees: The ingenious author, ſpeaking of the dormant ſtate of inſects, mentions an experiment he had

had made of extending that period of their exiſtence far beyond its uſual duration, even to ſome years. If this philoſopher could ſo improve his experiment, as to make it applicable to his own ſpecies, might not the diſcovery be turned to very ſingular advantage?

For my own part, returned SOPHRONIUS, were I maſter of ſuch a ſecret, I would rather apply it to the miſtaken ſpeculatiſt, than the falſly ambitious. The ſons of turbulence can only affect their unfortunate contemporaries; and the miſchief they do, generally ends with their lives. But the puzzlers and perverters of truth and ſcience are pernicious, perhaps, to ſeveral generations, and diſturb the repoſe of the world, many ages after they themſelves are removed out of it. The firſt eſſay, I would make of my ſoporific art in the literary world, ſhould be upon the critics, a tribe of

mortals, in the republic of letters, more ſubverſive of its peace and intereſt, than ——

Hold, good SOPHRONIUS! I doubt, your cenſure is now growing too general. Some low and petulant ſpirits, I confeſs, have brought a reproach upon the name of critic: but the art in itſelf certainly deſerves eſteem. No man can poſſeſs that talent in its true extent, or exerciſe it to full advantage, without being maſter of ſomething much more valuable than ARISTOTLE or LONGINUS can teach him. He muſt have a certain quick feeling of DELICACY in arts and manners; which no rules will ever be able to impart, where nature has denied.

Hardly, PHILOCLES, will you be able to bring me over to more favorable ſentiments of this critic-ſcience, by making DELICACY a neceſſary ingredient. For by all that I could ever diſcover of the true eſſence of that quality, as it is applied either

to

to the operations of art, or the conduct of manners, it owes its whole exiſtence entirely to fancy: and when I hear a man recommended as a critic of great delicacy, I immediately conclude him a perſon of high enthuſiaſm.

Do you really think then, SOPHRONIUS, that delicacy, whether conſidered as a faculty of the mind, or as an effect of art, is nothing more than the raptures of warm imagination, entirely unſupported by any principles of reaſon?

I will not venture to pronounce, anſwered SOPHRONIUS, of the clearneſs of other men's ideas: and, perhaps, the nice refiners in taſte and genius may have conceptions, to which common language cannot ſupply adequate terms. But of this I am ſure: whenever they talk upon the ſubject; either they reſolve delicacy into a certain *Je ne ſçai quoi*, or elſe explain it in ſo

vague and unpreciſe a manner, as to leave the matter abſolutely undetermined, to a mind that cannot embrace any principle, but what it clearly apprehends.

However looſely, replied PHILOCLES, this term may have been uſed heretofore in our language; or how much ſoever it is ſometimes depretiated by a miſtaken application both in writings and converſation; yet with the moſt approved authors amongſt us, it ſeems now to have obtained a determinate meaning, and is always mentioned by them as an high quality, and the finiſhing excellence of compoſition and manners.

As no man, PHILOCLES, is more clear in his conceptions than your ſelf; poſſibly I may receive that ſatisfaction from you, which I have in vain ſought for elſewhere. Tell me then, I intreat you, wherein this quality, according to your notion, conſiſts.

Delicacy,

Delicacy, replied PHILOCLES, is good ſenſe; but good ſenſe refined; which produces an inviolable attachment to decorum, and ſanctity as well as elegance of manners, with a clear diſcernment and warm ſenſibility of whatever is pure, regular, and polite; and, at the ſame time, an abhorrence of whatever is groſs, ruſtic, or impure, of unnatural, effeminate, and over-wrought ornaments of every kind. It is, in ſhort, the graceful and the beautiful added to the juſt and the good.

According to this account, ſaid SOPHRONIUS, Delicacy ſeems to be exactly the ſame thing, that Urbanity was among the Romans.

When that illuſtrious people, anſwered PHILOCLES, had ſpread their military fame over the world, and ſubdued all the nations around; they then turned their

attention to the embelliſhments of life. Their ſucceſs was equal to the vigor of their attempts; and they ſoon learned to poliſh their language, refine their pronunciation, cultivate humanity, and adorn their manners. A LÆLIUS and a SCIPIO[y] aroſe, and tranſplanted liberal wit from Greece; which afterwards grew and proſpered with a bloom and vigor ſcarce inferior to what it drew from its native ſoil.

Rome was now become the ſeat of elegance, as well as empire: nor were her eagles more dreaded, than her refinement was admired. The attainment of theſe accompliſhments, they ſtyled URBANITY; as they were the peculiar characteriſtics of the diſtinguiſhed inhabitants of this imperial city. This

[y] Scipio tam elegans liberalium artium omniſque doctrinæ et auctor et admirator fuit, ut Polybium Panætiumque præcellentes ingenio viros domi militiæque ſecum habuerit. Neque quiſquam hoc Scipione elegantius intervalla negotiorum otio diſjunxit, ſemperque inter arma ac ſtudia verſatus, aut corpus periculis, aut animum diſciplinis exercuit.

V. PATERC. L. 1. C. 13.

This I take to be the genuine acceptation of that word amongſt the ancient Romans. It ſeems to have been confined to the qualities I have mentioned, and never applied to the fine arts, as DELICACY is with us, and therefore differs from it only as a part from the whole.

To admit for the preſent, ſaid SOPHRONIUS, that all thoſe ideas are juſtly comprehended under the word DELICACY, which you have collected in your deſcription — Yet by what criterion is this property in any ſubject to be tried? In that operation of the faculties, which we call REASONING, the mind examines the objects, as they ſtand in reality: and for our direction, there is always a ſtandard in the nature of things. But is this the caſe with regard to what connoiſſeurs call AMIABLE or DELICATE? Beauty and pleaſure are nothing but an agreement between the object and the

the faculty. What then can determine a man's approbation or diſlike in theſe points, but the peculiar caſt of his mind?

Tho' it ſhould not be poſſible, anſwered PHILOCLES, preciſely to fix the criterion you are enquiring after; yet would it not neceſſarily follow, that there is abſolutely no ſuch thing. Several inſtances might be mentioned, wherein the mind has undoubtedly a certain fixed rule by which it judges; when, nevertheleſs, it is not able to explain poſitively, in what that rule conſiſts.

Will not a true judge in painting, who has been long converſant among the noble remains of that charming art, be able to diſtinguiſh a copy from an original? And would not you, SOPHRONIUS, venture to give your teſtimony, in a court of juſtice, to your friend's hand-writing? And yet, were you, or the connoiſſeur I juſt now mentioned, to be aſked by what criterion you

you were able to determine ſo aſſuredly in the reſpective caſes before you; neither of you moſt certainly, would be capable of aſcertaining, to the ſatisfaction of the enquirer, that ſtandard in your mind, by which you formed your ſeveral judgments.

But the ſtandard, by which we are to be guided in the affair of DELICACY, is no doubtful or chimærical notion: it has a real and ſure foundation.

Nature has implanted in us an internal ſenſe; which gives us a juſt perception of the relation between our faculties of apprehending, and the objects preſented to them. We are framed in ſuch a manner, that ſome actions, ideas, or forms, which occur to us, as neceſſarily excite ſatisfaction and delight, as others create diſtaſte and averſion. When we look upon a beautiful picture, the mind immediately recurs to nature; and finding a certain agree-

ment

ment between its own ideas of beauty, and the repreſentation which ſtands before us, it inſtantly acknowledges the ſimilar graces, and recognizes the true and proper ſtandard.

The criterion then of DELICACY in any action or compoſition, is the ſure feeling and conſciouſneſs of its conformity to a like natural ſenſation within us, operating neceſſarily on the mind, the very inſtant that the kindred forms or ideas are exhibited to us. This ſenſe and taſte of beauty may indeed, like all our other faculties, be greatly improved by diſcipline and exerciſe; as on the contrary, for want of them, it may be much impaired. But ſtill, it is evident, that this diſcerning power is born with us, and is as certain a principle, as any belonging to our nature. For do we not ſee, that even infants are delighted with the firſt view of a round ball, and prefer it to a leſs regular figure? The untaught mind diſcovers a ſympathy between the ideas

ideas and objects, and eaſily diſtinguiſhes the fair and ſhapely, from the irregular and deformed.

Hardly, ſaid SOPHRONIUS, can this internal ſenſe be looked upon as a ſure criterion; ſince men's notions are ſo widely different, that what raiſes the idea of beauty in one, may have a contrary effect upon another.

This kind of objection, returned PHILOCLES, may be urged with equal force againſt the evidence even of mathematical demonſtration. Tho' the philoſopher has evinced the truth of a propoſition by the moſt infallible deductions of reaſoning; yet there may be ſome particular minds; which, either through a Weakneſs of their faculties, or the intervention of wrong ideas, cannot feel the force of his concluſions. But this, you know, is no argument againſt the truth and certainty of the reaſoning: the

the demonſtration is no leſs clear, though not apprehended by every individual. It is the very ſame in our preſent inquiry. It cannot with any ſhew of reaſon be inferred, that there is no ſuch thing as beauty, or no criterion to aſcertain it, becauſe ſome particular minds do not feel the one, or apprehend the other. If a diſpute ariſe, we appeal to nature and the common feelings of mankind, and do not heſitate to affirm, that, what appears beautiful to one, will generally do ſo to another; if his faculties are right, and his attention fair and impartial.

Who ever denied the beauty of the VENUS DE MEDICIS? Or does any man ſay, there is not a diſtinguiſhed delicacy in the works of thoſe inimitable artiſts, RAPHAEL and GUIDO? Some connoiſſeurs may, it is true, give the preference to the former; and ſome perhaps be more charmed with the latter; or they may dif-

fer

fer in the degree of merit to be aſcribed to this or that particular performance: but ſtill they all agree that grace and elegance are the characteriſticks of both theſe maſters. This is a point, which never has been, and never will be conteſted. And whence can this univerſal conſent ariſe, but from ſomething certain and uniform in nature? From whence, but that inward ſenſe common to mankind, which operates with the ſame efficacy upon the generality of the ſpecies?

Nor is this true with reſpect to the imitative arts only; but it is equally applicable to every object that preſents itſelf to us. ———

Look yonder! (ſaid he, pointing to a view of the Thames) what a beautiful proſpect lies before you! Behold the gentle glidings of that lovely river? See how he winds his full ſtream in pleaſing meanders, ſteering his majeſtic courſe through verdant

verdant meads, and diſtributing wealth and pleaſure, as he flows along! Obſerve the numerous villas which adorn his banks, and are adorned by him! —— All, that have ever beheld this ſcene of delight, agree in admiring its charms, and acknowledge that the delicate ideas here raiſed in their minds, are perfectly correſpondent to their natural ſenſe of lovelineſs and grace.

NATURE then is the ſtandard and aſcertainer of DELICACY. To her tribunal the defenders of beauty make their appeal; to her ſentence they finally ſubmit their cauſe.

The great maſters of criticiſm have indeed, upon very juſt grounds, been eſteemed by all improved nations, as proper regulators of taſte; and therefore a deference is due to their known rules and eſtabliſhed meaſures. But this deference is not founded on the authority of their names, but

on

juſtneſs of their obſervations and reaſonings. And on this account they have ever been looked upon as infallible guides, to prevent the mind from deviating out of the plain paths of nature.

Granting, returned SOPHRONIUS, that you have pointed out a proper ſtandard for the trial of beauty in the imitative arts; will the ſame rule ſerve for THE DELICACY OF GOOD-BREEDING? This ſeems to depend entirely upon prevailing cuſtoms, which are of ſo unſettled a nature, that they are ever varying with the complexion of times and climates. What is looked upon as polite in one age or country, is, you are ſenſible, eſteemed the reverſe in another. How then can there be any ſettled principle, to direct our judgment concerning a thing ſo vague and inconſtant?

That part of good manners, replied PHILOCLES, to which you here allude,

relates only, I ſuppoſe, to certain forms and ceremonies. And as far as theſe are abſolutely indifferent in themſelves, and have no other value but what they derive from the faſhionable world; to that ſtandard alone (wavering and uncertain as it is) we muſt be content to refer ourſelves in this caſe. But yet ſurely there are many exterior obſervances and forms of behavior, in which we may clearly diſcover a comelineſs or inelegance, that ariſes manifeſtly from a conformity or unſuitableneſs to the nature of things, to common ſenſe, and an inbred feeling of DECORUM. If this were otherwiſe; on what principle do we claim a right to draw compariſons between the politeneſs of different countries, and give the uſages and cuſtoms of one, the preference to thoſe of another?

But however this may be; yet the more eſſential points of DELICACY IN MANNERS are clearly aſcertained by our internal

ternal ſenſe, and are therefore invariably the ſame in every age and every climate.

Suppoſe a man, for inſtance, to be ſollicited by his friend to do him a good office, or lend him aſſiſtance in diſtreſs. After great importunity he yields to his intreaties, but with ſuch a ſullen air, and reluctant countenance, as muſt offend even the receiver. — Who would not feel the odiouſneſs of granting a requeſt with ſuch circumſtances of indecency? Suppoſe another man conferring a favor with ſuch a pleaſing chearfulneſs and humane addreſs, as makes the giver appear to be the perſon obliged — In this caſe, it is impoſſible for any, but the moſt brutal and degenerate, not to be ſenſible of the comelineſs of ſuch a demeanor, and applaud this amiable manner of heightening the value of a generous action.

In ſuch points of behavior then as theſe, which are the moſt material parts of good-breeding, we have the ſame rule to form our judgments, as in the imitative arts. They depend not on the caprice of faſhion, or the varying complexion of times and climates; but are founded on that internal ſenſe of DECORUM, that univerſal humanity, common and natural to all mankind; which is the ground of our love and hatred, the guide of our approbation and diſlike.

If we proceed farther, and extend our inquiries to things of higher importance, to the nobleſt and moſt eſſential beauty, the purity of a moral conduct——

That culture of the mind, interrupted SOPHRONIUS, which leads a man to ſee and feel the comelineſs of VIRTUE, has undoubtedly a ſure foundation, and an infallible

fallible ſtandard in nature. And as this kind of refinement is of the higheſt concern to us, it muſt be allowed to have a juſt claim to our beſt attention and regard. But here, PHILOCLES, I muſt ſtop. Any thing, beyond this, ſeems to me a misfortune rather than an happineſs.

It has been juſtly obſerved, that men of a delicate frame are too ſenſibly affected with the accidents of life. Upon any proſperous event, their ſpirits are apt to be elevated beyond all bounds: and in adverſity, their grief pierces ſo deep into the tender frame, that it becomes inſupportable. It is poſſible, perhaps, that in ſome inſtances they may have more lively enjoyments than men of a coarſer mould; but then they have alſo more pungent ſorrows. Occurrences, which would have no effect upon a ſtronger mind, afflict them to the laſt degree: the moſt trivial diſappointment, the omiſſion of a ceremony, a careleſs word or

geſture, nay even a look will diſcompoſe their temper, and caſt an heavy gloom on their minds.

This obſervation, returned PHILOCLES, is founded on a miſtaken notion of the true character of DELICACY. If fine ſenſations are not ſupported with ſtrong ſenſe, they dwindle into effeminacy: nor had ever any man an elegant taſte, who had not alſo a ſound underſtanding. There is indeed in a delicate frame a certain degree of ſoftneſs: but then it is only juſt as much as ſuffices to prevent the inconveniences, that attend upon the rough and boiſterous paſſions. Something, it muſt be owned, there is in it, not unlike a feminine tenderneſs; but no more than ſerves to render the mind ſuſceptible of the fine impreſſions of beauty, and give amiableneſs to that maſculine ſtrength, on which a delicate taſte ſo much depends, that it cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt without it. To be able

able to form a right judgment of arts and manners; to ſee and feel their ſymmetry and proportion; there are, you muſt be ſenſible, ſo many views to be taken in, and ſuch variety of circumſtances to be compared; that it is impoſſible any one can arrive at true refinement, who has not ſtrong natural abilities. There may, it is true, be good ſenſe, where the exquiſiteneſs of taſte is wanting: but there can be no exquiſite taſte without good ſenſe.

That frame of mind therefore, which you repreſent as laboring under all the inconveniences of nice and tender ſenſations, I can by no means allow to have any fair pretenſions to the character of GENUINE DELICACY; which is never attended with thoſe conſequences, that flow from an imbecillity of paſſions.

Were I to allow this, returned SOPHRONIUS; yet DELICACY, according to

your own idea of it, is certainly liable to many unhappy conſequences. Let me mention one; which, I think, ſhould very much abate a man's ardor of obtaining this quality. As it has ſuch an "inviolable "attachment to every thing that is ele-"gant and polite; and ſuch an abhor-"rence of inelegance and coarſeneſs[z];" it muſt neceſſarily deprive a man of that great ſatisfaction in life, the frequency of ſocial enjoyment. Seldom will he be able to find company adapted to his taſte: his expectations run high; and the fund to ſupply them is extreme ſcanty. How few are there, who ever aim at ſuch refinement! How much fewer, who attain it! The generality of men muſt therefore be diſagreeable and irkſome to him: and he will very rarely meet with one, from whoſe ſociety he can receive any tolerable degree of entertainment.

What

[z] Vide p. 7. ſupra.

What then has he gained by this faſtidious niceneſs? He has refined himſelf into a diſinclination to be pleaſed with the intercourſes of almoſt all around him, and the ordinary ſatisfactions of his being. Forſaking therefore his own kind, he reſolves, in a fit of ſpleen, to ſequeſter himſelf from the world, as being too delicate to live amongſt ſuch uncultivated mortals. But in vain does he ſeek redreſs from ſolitude: for by this eſtrangement from human commerce, he contracts, by degrees, ſuch an inveterate peeviſhneſs and ſeverity, as imbitters his whole life, and ends, perhaps, at laſt in a ſettled miſanthropy.

This, PHILOCLES, may prove, and, I doubt not, has often proved the conſequence of cultivating ſuch a DELICACY of ſentiment.

And

And is this a deſireable ſtate? Is it any ſymptom of a ſound habit? On the contrary; are not theſe the ſad indications of a vitiated and diſeaſed conſtitution of mind?

How different is the ſtate of that man, who is not over-nice and curious in his demands of ſocial intercourſe! As he has not raiſed his ideas of human nature to an immoderate height; he is content to take mankind as he finds them, with allowances to their foibles and imperfections. And as he has not refined his ſenſations into an inaptitude of being pleaſed; he can ſcarce converſe with any of his fellow-creatures, without ſome degree of entertainment.

That refinement then, which robs a man of theſe ordinary ſatisfactions, is ſurely rather to be avoided than purſued: and a temper even the moſt inſenſible to every beauty

beauty and grace, is far preferable to a diſpoſition ſo hard to be pleaſed, and which can be ſo ſeldom gratified.

If this DELICACY of taſte, replied PHILOCLES, narrows the circle of our friendſhips; it certainly renders them more perfect. An indifference to the company and converſation of the MANY, will add ſtrength and duration to our particular attachments. It is very true, a man of an unrefined frame, how ſtrong ſoever his ſenſe may be, is not nice and exact in ſelecting his acquaintance: almoſt any are ſufficient to anſwer his demands. Such a man has not ſenſations fine enough to make an election; and has therefore no friends, becauſe he has no DELICACY. But is that a deſireable ſtate of mind, which excludes one of the greateſt ornaments and joys of human life? It muſt be owned, that he who has digeſted his obſervations on mankind, and formed his mind to an excellence

and

and elegance of ſentiment, cannot take any great delight in mixed and undiſtinguiſhed company; and will therefore be inclined to limit his friendſhips and acquaintance. But his affections, being thus circumſcribed within narrow bounds, will conſequently riſe to an higher pitch, than if they were more diffuſed. This is ſo far from leſſening, that it increaſes the ardor of our enjoyments: and if it diminiſh the number, it heightens the value of our friendſhips.

I will not deny, that the cultivation of refined ſentiment may give a man a diſreliſh to the general turn of converſation. Whenever therefore he cannot find ſuch ſociety as is adapted to his diſpoſition; why ſhould he be cenſured for ſtepping aſide from the beaten track of life, to indulge in ſeparate thought, and the calm delights of ſelf-enjoyment? This ſurely is a meaſure rather to be applauded than condemned;

demned; and what every ſenſible man wou'd purſue in ſuch a caſe: for,

" ——— Wiſdom's ſelf
" Oft ſeeks to ſweet retired ſolitude;
" Where with her beſt nurſe, contemplation,
" She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings;
" Which, in the various buſtle of reſort,
" Were all too ruffled, and ſometimes impaired[a]."

Let him not remain too long ſequeſtered, but return in proper time to mix again with the world; and his conduct can neither be deemed inconſiſtent with ſocial affection, nor have any ill effect upon his temper. If indeed he extend his love of retirement ſo far, as abſolutely to exclude himſelf from ſociety, I cannot undertake his vindication. He is gone beyond the point of perfection, and is therefore indelicate.

SOPHRO-

[a] Milton's Comus,

SOPHRONIUS attended very earneſtly to theſe obſervations of his friend, and ſeemed by his countenance to be almoſt convinced in this point.

After a pauſe —— Suppoſe, ſaid he, I ſhould allow your reaſonings to be juſt, in this particular; and that the DELICACY of taſte in the choice of friends may, perhaps, be an happineſs rather than a misfortune: yet I am ſtill doubtful, whether this quality in general be a neceſſary attainment. For after all that you have ſaid, or can poſſibly urge farther on this ſubject; I am perſwaded, that good ſenſe, a right mind, and generous affection, have ſuch a native comelineſs, that they ſtand in need of no adventitious ornaments, but like diamonds, appear to full advantage, when plain ſet.

The

The diamond, returned PHILOCLES, was poliſhed, before it was ſet. And whatever value it might have in its rough ſtate; it had certainly no beauty, till it came from the hands of the judicious artiſt. Thus it is with ſenſe and virtue: they are jewels indeed, even when rough and unadorned: but ſurely their merit is more attractive, and they command a much higher eſtimation, when they are ſet off with ſuitable embelliſhments.

Hence it was that SOCRATES, the wiſeſt and beſt of all the Grecian ſages, tempered the harſhneſs of precepts with an air of pleaſantry; well knowing, that to pleaſe, was the ſureſt way to perſwade. He therefore ſtript philoſophy of her uncouth attire, and gave her a more graceful mein.

Our

Our chief buſineſs in life is indeed to form juſt ſentiments, in order to produce a juſt conduct. Yet ſomething ſtill is wanting; ſome additional grace, to make truth and virtue operate with full ſucceſs, both with reſpect to ourſelves and our fellow-creatures. They may, it is true, procure us the eſteem, but will not be able to gain us the love of mankind, without AN HAPPINESS OF MANNER.

It is with great juſtice, SOPHRONIUS ſets ſo high a value on the generous affections: but valuable as they undoubtedly are, yet if they be not accompanied with a certain grace, they will neither have the merit nor efficacy of benevolence attended by DELICACY.

It is your humor to run down every thing, that tends to refinement. Yet from many inſtances you muſt allow me

to

to ſay, that you are not, in reality, ſo great an enemy to it, as you affect to appear. No man confers a favor with a better grace. Extend your refinement farther, and you will find it no leſs uſeful in the momentous affairs of life. Truth and virtue are, in theſe caſes, what foundation and ſtrength are to an edifice: they give ſolidity and ſupport. But if ſymmetry, proportion, and ſuitable decorations be not added; you cannot boaſt of a complete ſtructure.

In every view, SOPHRONIUS, it is evident, I think, that the refinements and elegancies of life, not only render men more agreeable and amiable to one another, but are alſo conducive to the greateſt and higheſt purpoſes. For this reaſon, perhaps, the author of our frame has made us ſuſceptible of the pleaſures of imagination; that we might be the more readily gained over to the intereſts of

virtue; when we thus find, that the way to her lies through the paths of pleaſure.

This ſeems to be the excellent deſign, and this is ever found to be the conſtant effect of genuine DELICACY. When it conſpires with virtue, its influence is as ſurely felt, as its lovelineſs is readily acknowledged: like mingled ſtreams, they become more forcible by being united.

Thus it is, that theſe mutual friends confirm and ſtrengthen each other's intereſt. DELICACY allures men to VIRTUE; and VIRTUE aſcertains and ſupports DELICACY. The connexion between them is ſtrong; the harmony perfect; and the effects anſwerable.

But do we not ſee many, returned SOPHRONIUS, diſtinguiſhed for the elegance of their taſte, both in arts and manners, who at the ſame time are inſenſible of

of moral beauty, and utter ſtrangers to the ſenſations of inward harmony and proportion?

It is no uncommon thing, anſwered PHILOCLES, for men to live at variance with themſelves, and in contradiction to their own principles. This muſt be the caſe of thoſe, who cultivate the exterior embelliſhments of life, whilſt their minds lie waſte and neglected. For what is that principle, on which they ground their entertainment and pleaſure of refined taſte, but a ſenſe of ſymmetry, order and proportion in nature? They cannot then but be ſenſible, that there is ſuch a thing as beauty in the mind, as well as in the outward forms, and the latter, however valuable in itſelf, yet when compared with the former, is but of a ſubordinate and lower degree. It is poſſible that the elegance of their fancy in the inferior kind may have engroſſed their attention, and made them overlook the ſuperior worth of the other;

eſpecially where ſome unſubdued paſſions concur to help on the miſtake; or the force of inveterate habit has taught them to ſtop at the low attainment of ſubaltern beauty. But when fancy is ſatiated, and reaſon has leiſure to operate; they muſt, in the philoſophic hour, perceive the abſurdity of admiring EXTERIOR ſymmetry, without recurring to the INTERIOR, the more eſſential beauty. Whilſt therefore they act in oppoſition to theſe ſuggeſtions of the mind, they muſt unavoidably be unhappy.

Your obſervation, ſaid SOPHRONIUS, brings to my mind an aſſertion, which I find maintained by many of the celebrated ancients and moderns; "that the high and "genuine taſte (as they call it) of the "polite arts, never reſided in the breaſt "of an immoral man." They imagined it impoſſible for one, who was impure in his actions, to be refined in his ſenſations: ſince, in their eſtimation, the ſame faculties

ties and diſpoſitions, which would lead a man to diſcern and reliſh the charms of arts, would neceſſarily incline him to taſte and admire the delights of a regular conduct; betwixt which, they thought, there was an inſeparable connexion. But this is one of the fanciful maxims of enthuſiaſtic genius; and inſtances might be produced, which inconteſtably demonſtrate the falſhood of the aſſertion.

When you conſider, replied PHILOCLES, what a ſtrong diſpoſition there is in mankind, to vilify thoſe, whoſe extraordinary talents lift them up to the notice and admiration of the world; you will be very tender in giving a deciſive ſentence in the caſe. But if we take the objection in its ſtrongeſt light; will a few inſtances of deviation overthrow a general maxim? Still it may be true, that the ſtudy of the fine arts naturally leads to the love of virtue. When a man

man has given himſelf up to theſe engaging ſpeculations; they take ſuch full poſſeſſion of the heart, that he is not at leiſure to lend an ear to the calls of ambition, or the demands of inordinate ſelf-paſſions. And as theſe grand inciters of vice are thus happily ſilenced; he is more likely to hearken to the ſuggeſtions of virtue, and incline more readily to every duty of benevolence and ſocial regard.

Upon the whole; from the beſt and cooleſt judgment I have been able to make; I cannot but be of opinion, it very rarely happens, that a man of a true refined taſte in arts and literature, is not at leaſt an honeſt man. He may now and then, perhaps, be betrayed into ſome little ſlips and miſtakes in his conduct: but theſe unwarineſſes do not darken the whole character, nor give any juſt grounds to fix upon him the imputation of immo-

rality.

rality. "Such ſmall ſtains and blemiſhes "(as the inimitable Mr. ADDISON obſerves) "die away and diſappear, amidſt the "brightneſs which ſurrounds him."

But the bell has rung for breakfaſt. —— Come, good SOPHRONIUS, —— the ladies will grow impatient.

FINIS.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM